

# COSMOPOLITAN CHRONICLE

True tales from the annals of history, archaeology, construction, and  
restoration of the Casa de Bandini and Cosmopolitan Hotel.  
Old Town San Diego State Historic Park

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## Bandini's Face

**Therese Muranaka**  
Associate State Archaeologist  
California State Parks  
San Diego Coast District

Whenever I see the family picture of Juan Bandini and his beautiful daughter Margarita, I stare and stare at his eyes, nose, ears, and mouth. Of Italian



and Spanish descent, he was the son of Ysidora Blancos de Bandini and Captain José Bandini, a Spanish sailor and military officer. Born October 4, 1800, in Arica, Peru, Juan first came to San Diego about 1819. Marrying an Estudillo daughter, Dolores, in 1822, he begins building the house we chronicle here about five years later. Already his children Josefa, Alejandro Felix and

Arcadia were born. With a line running to famous daughters, his local history was begun.

Regarding this Bandini legacy, there is a very special event in Old Town every summer that celebrates his and other early families' lives. Known as 'Descendents' Day,' it is the day that these early *Californio* families come back to Old Town to gather with other relatives, both known and unknown. When I can, I love to go to 'Descendents' Day.' Looking around the room, I can easily see who belongs to which family. The Bandini descendents' eyes are wide and round. A little girl running up the aisle has to be a Moreno because the iris of one of her beautiful eyes is slightly raised. I also remember an early document describing the young Jose Manuel Machado's physical makeup, a military report which describes him with *una nariz ancha* (a wide nose), a pretty nose still seen with some descendents today.

A while ago, I arranged to test the DNA of some of these well-known families. Through a non-profit museum's efforts, we tested 9 samples from families who we knew were clearly related to the presidial soldiers. We did some

Machados, some Serranos, and the Lopez Family. The Lopez descendents were proud to find out that they were from Haplogroup V, traced back 17,000 years to a Basque female whose descendents make up only 5% of Europe's population. Some of the Serranos were interested to know that they were Haplogroup D, that is of Mexican or South American Indian ancestry, including possibly the Costanoans of Monterey. Soon perhaps we will find early *Californio* soldiers' families who are of Jewish descent, or African descent, or from the Phillipine Island since these first historic settlers were from many places.

For fun, you can search your own family's DNA through the National Geographic Society. You might read Bryan Sykes' book *The Seven Daughters of Eve: The Science that Reveals Our Genetic Ancestry* for a fun explanation of how this all works. William Mason's *The Census of 1790: A Demographic History of Colonial California* (1998 Ballena Press) is the best of all, as he uses the early photographs to show ethnicity.

The people of this historic little town reflected already the fascinating genetic variability of the population here today.

